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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the position of Canada with regard to international education, drawing on the findings of a prior study intended to foster development of an agenda for promoting a more strategic national approach to the internationalization of Canadian education. International education, for the purposes of this discussion, includes extending Canadian education to people from other countries, promoting educational experiences in other countries for Canadians, and fostering an international orientation in the curricula and milieu of Canadian institutions. The importance of international education for Canada can be supported by cultural, political, academic, and economic reasons, with the economic aspect being of great importance to Canadians who recognize that their country faces international competition and international opportunities. At present, Canada's proportional allocation of public expenditures to international culture, science, and education is small when compared with the allocations of some European countries. In addition, the future outlook is not promising for Canada in the international arena. The study found, however, that a considerable amount is happening in a largely uncoordinated fashion to promote international education in Canada. These initiatives should be encouraged, and national advocacy organizations for international education should expand their scope and find ways to include the provinces in their efforts. If a relatively loose confederation of these organizations could be organized, productive synergies could be realized by making a whole greater than the sum of its parts. (SLD)

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CAN CANADA GET ITS ACT TOGETHER IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION?

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CAN CANADA GET ITS ACT TOGETHER IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION?

I appreciate the invitation to meet with you this afternoon for a couple of reasons. First, I have considerable respect (and sympathy) for C.I.C.I.C.'s mission to promote the recognition and portability of credentials as well as the academic, employment, and professional mobility of individuals; I can think of no more important mandate in this age of a globalized, technology-enhanced knowledge economy, and I commend you on achieving the collaboration of federal and provincial governments with educational associations and institutions that is necessary to its pursuit. Secondly, as one with a long-standing interest and considerable involvement in the advancement of international education I am glad you are here, and I welcome this opportunity to exchange views with you on a subject of crucial importance and mutual concern; I hope to learn at least as much from you as you do from me during our brief conversation.

As I think you know, last month I completed a study (under the auspices of the Canadian Bureau for International Education, with support from Human Resources Development Canada) that was intended to foster the development of an agenda for promoting a more strategic national approach to the internationalization of Canadian educational institutions, particularly at the post-secondary level. What I agreed to do this afternoon was to outline a few of the main observations arising from that study, even though it won't be officially released until next month. So I'll tell you a bit about its background and procedures, mention a few of its major conclusions, and comment on its principal recommendations. Finally, I'll identify certain implications and inclinations that I think are relevant to your work – although I suspect (or hope) that there will be others that will occur to you which we can explore during our following discussion.

First, it is necessary to define what we mean by "international education", or the "internationalization" of educational institutions. CBIE defines the former as "a set of activities that link people and educational institutions across national borders, both virtually and in person, for the purpose of sharing knowledge and of creating networks for the expansion and distribution of knowledge"; and Jane Knight defines the latter as "the process of integrating an international dimension into the teaching/training, research and service functions of a university, college or technical institute". Regardless of the terms used, however, I don't think the concept can be properly understood without reference to the specific kinds of activities that comprise it. From a Canadian perspective, they include:

- providing Canadian education to people of other countries (e.g., through enrolling international students in Canadian programs – whether they are offered on campuses in Canada, on overseas branch campuses of Canadian institutions, on campuses of foreign institutions through "franchise" arrangements or "twinning" with Canadian institutions, or in other countries via distance learning from Canada);

- transposing Canadian educational expertise to other countries for adaptation to their own settings (e.g., through capacity guilding, development assistance, technology transfer, training contracts, etc.);

- engaging Canadians in educational experiences based in other countries (e.g., through semester- and work-abroad programs, study tours, foreign "virtual" courses, etc.);

- fostering an international orientation in the curricula and milieu of Canadian institutions (not only through specialized offerings like foreign languages, area studies, international affairs, pre-posting briefings and international business, but more widely as a dimension of virtually all programs – academic, cultural, social, etc.);

- participating in international projects (e.g., faculty and student exchanges, multinational research networks, IFI-funded training and development undertakings, etc.); and

- projecting Canada's image and values internationally (e.g., through Canadian Studies programs in other countries, trade and cultural missions abroad, visits by foreign leaders and journalists to Canada, etc.).

Clearly, the recognition and portability of credentials is crucial to success in many of these activities.

Their importance to our country is supported by four kinds of rationales. The first is culturally-based and derives from such observations as:

- Canada's values are worthy and should be transmitted to other countries for their benefit;

- Canadian values include the recognition of a responsibility to help those in less fortunate nations through education;

- the better Canada's culture is understood the more highly respected it will be in the global arena and, thus, the higher its international influence can be;

- Canadians' understanding of other cultures and languages is enriching in itself, and will enable them to live satisfying and productive lives in the international arena within which many of them will have to operate; and

- discovering the values of others can stimulate a greater appreciation of one's own culture.

Secondly, international education is endorsed for such political reasons as:

- Canada's security depends on Canadians' familiarity with the motivations of foreign leaders, with the political structures and historical systems of other countries, with the strategic alliances and animosities among them, and with their relative strengths and weaknesses;

- Canada's stature within powerful regional and global networks depends on the awareness of its distinctiveness possessed by leaders of other nations;

- Canada's ability to exert positive influence on world affairs requires knowledge of the conditions and aspirations of those in other countries; and

- the progress of globalization means that no country can maintain its sovereignty by adopting a doctrine of international isolationism.

While the first of these rationales reflects "soft power", the second represents diplomacy of a stronger self-interested type.

A third rationale for international education is academic in nature and incorporates such arguments as:

- the quality of higher education in general is enhanced by infusing international elements into the content of all curricula, by expanding area studies and foreign language programs, and by capitalizing on the linguistic and cultural diversity that attends the presence on campus of international students;

- the learning and prospects of Canadian students are enriched by opportunities to pursue a portion of their studies in other countries and cultures, and correspondingly, the education of people from elsewhere is abetted by study in Canada;

- the capability of research to advance knowledge and stimulate innovation is enlarged by participation in scholarly investigations that involve the best minds in the world;

- the capacity of educational institutions in less developed countries to foster progress is enlarged by sharing with them the expertise, systems, and technologies of those in more industrialized nations;

- the international exchange of scholars extends their expertise and supplements the academic strength of both host and home institutions; and

- the revenue from international education is helpful in enriching the academic endeavours of Canadian institutions.

These academic rationales underlay the reasons most commonly cited by institutional leaders for engaging in internationalization, as determined in both the 1993 and 1999 surveys conducted for AUCC.

It is the fourth category of rationale, however, that seems to speak most loudly and clearly to many Canadians – perhaps because it hits more closely to their "pocketbooks"; for it is economic in nature. A recent study by the Conference Board of Canada, for example, found that:

- involvement in international education is positively correlated to economic performance;

- international education activity, measured in the form of student outflows, has a strong positive impact on the rate of gross domestic product growth;

- international education, measured in the form of aggregated student flows, has a positive

impact on innovation, measured by trade in disembodied technologies, international trade, and foreign direct investment growth; and

- countries that have a more coordinated national approach to international education activity reap greater economic benefits than those that do not.

Similarly, it has been concluded that "more than 40% of Canada's GDP and more than 1/3 of jobs depend on exports, a proportion higher than in any other G-7 country" – with the implication that international education can foster higher rates of employment, both through an increase in jobs available and through the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes required by employees in the international marketplace. Further, international students pursuing Canadian education (or their sponsors), whether at home or in Canada, contribute large amounts of revenue both to the institutions whose offerings they "purchase" and to the Canadian economy generally; indeed, it is claimed that worldwide "the market value is $30 billion a year for study abroad and $60 billion for all international education and training products and services [and] every US $7 billion of the international student market creates 100,000 jobs." Moreover, international students of Canadian institutions, back home, frequently rise to positions of prominence in which they may be inclined to promote enhanced trade with Canada as a country that has contributed to their success through education. Evidently, international education is big business.

So there is no lack of rationales to support the internationalization of our educational institutions. However, this has become a highly competitive endeavour and, as the Conference Board found, "Canada's overall participation in international education is falling in comparison with the nine comparator countries" that were considered in its study. In terms of annual per capita federal support for international education initiatives, Canada invests 80 cents as compared with Australia's $9.07, Japan's $4.94, the U.S.'s $4.70, Germany's $3.02, and the Netherlands'

$2.86. Only 3-4% of Canadian students study abroad – the vast majority of them in the U.S. and most of the remainder in the U.K., France, and Germany – compared with 8% of students in the European Community, which is moving toward a goal of 10%. And among host countries for international students, Canada ranks sixth overall and has dropped to eighth in terms of university enrollment – behind the U.S., France, Germany, the U.K., the Russian Federation, Japan and Australia, respectively; indeed, as CBIE has pointed out, "within the last fifteen years, Canada's share of the market has dropped a full percentage point (to just over 2% with 90,000 students at all levels) while Australia's has risen by the same proportion (to well over 3% with enrollment virtually tripling to 144,000), the U.K.'s share has jumped to over 12 %, and in the U.S. it has stabilized at around 30%. More generally, Canada's proportional allocation of public expenditures to international culture, science and education of .03% (in 1990) looks miserly when compared with France's .23%, Germany's .16%, and the U.K.'s .21%.

Nor is the future outlook promising for increased competitiveness by Canada in the international arena. There is no Canadian counterpart to other countries' promotional agencies such as Australia's AIEF, the U.K.'s British Council, the USIA, Learn Germany, the Japan Foundation, and l'Alliance Française; and there has been no compelling call from Ottawa to "get with it". Meanwhile:

- France has recently launched an Edu-France campaign designed to increase foreign enrolments in its education system to 500,000 over the next few years;

- U.K. Prime Minister Blair pledged in 1999 to help British institutions bolster international enrolments to 25% of the total, an additional 50,000 foreign students by 2005; and

- former American President Clinton issued an executive memorandum in 2000 committing the U.S. to an increase in international students and international exchange opportunities for American students, teachers, scholars and citizens at all levels of society – pledging the

government's support for enhancing programs to build international partnerships and expertise and calling for an expansion in foreigh language training and intercultural studies, the use of advanced technologies as agents for such endeavours, and a doubling of the country's participation in international education.

So Canada is likely to fall even further behind – unless concerted efforts are launched soon to build upon and leverage the kinds of commendable but largely uncoordinated initiatives that have already been undertaken.

It was within this rather depressing context that I was engaged to conduct my study last Fall. The charge was to interview some fifty government, business and education leaders across the country (identified by CBIE) with a view to determining their awareness of the situation, their opinions on the roles that each might play to improve it, and their suggestions as to how a more strategic approach to developing a Canadian agenda to foster international education might best be pursued. While a substantial number of respondents were naturally based in Ottawa (and three others had to be contacted by telephone), I conducted the majority of interviews personally in fifteen other cities across the country – three each in British Columbia, the prairie provinces, Ontario, Quebec, and the Atlantic region.

It was an invigorating undertaking and, although Canada's relative weakness in terms of national strategic thrust was lamented by many, I completed my perambulations with more confidence and optimism than when I began. The reasons for this can be summarized as follows:

- Notwithstanding the inevitable rhetoric and finger-pointing between the federal and provincial levels of government, a great deal is happening in a largely uncoordinated fashion. Although there is little meaningful collaboration among federal departments in this field, several of them have initiated numerous activities and projects to promote internationalization – most notably DFAIT, HRDC, and Industry Canada. And provincial consortia of institutions with government support have independently been established in at least half of the provinces to promote international education (albeit largely for joint marketing purposes, although over time they tend to encompass the less economic

rationales as well); moreover, two provinces (Alberta and Quebec) have within the past year launched comprehensive programs to enhance the internationalization of their institutions.

- Notwithstanding a general lack of engagement in this field by business interests (fueled by the precedence of their need to survive commercially, a view that education is a government responsibility, and some skepticism about the motivation of institutions in pursuing internationalization), a few private-sector leaders have embraced the cause with generous contributions of financial support and individual effort directed at particular programs or institutions that they endorse personally.

- Notwithstanding their overwhelming concerns about inadequate funds for general operating purposes and deferred maintenance deficits, along with considerable antipathy and other priorities on the part of some faculty and student constituencies, certain education leaders have accorded internationalization pride of place as they seek to improve their academic quality and enhance their institutional profiles in the increasingly competitive market in which they must function. These individuals take the refreshing view that, lamentable as our lack of national thrust and government funding for international education may be, if one truly wants to internationalize one's college or university ways can be found to do so; and they have been quite entrepreneurial in discovering and pursuing them.

What remains missing from this quite encouraging picture, however, is a mechanism to provide nation-wide coherence to these welcome but fragmented endeavours. They operate in sporadic and independent ways, they generate damaging confusion for observers and dysfunctional competition for participants, and they militate against developing a Canadian "brand" and sharing of best practices.

Rather than delving further into the numerous specific conclusions arising from my study, let me move now to the three recommendations that resulted from them. The first is that the multifarious initiatives currently under way should be applauded, their diversity celebrated, and their acceleration encouraged. Worthwhile activities have been suggested, creative plans are being pursued, and valuable progress has been made; it would be foolish, especially in the unlikelihood of a national "white knight" with deep pockets for internationalization, not to move "full speed

ahead" on them – even though they are going in many different directions at once. These include the suggestions for "seed money" to support both marketing and mobility tabled by AUCC and others; they include the aspirations being worked toward by certain federal government departments (notably HRDC and IC) notwithstanding the lack of horizontality among them, as well as the currently independent but nevertheless determined strategies inaugurated by some provincial governments; they include continuing efforts to entice private-sector interests into the field; and they include the entrepreneurial activities in those few institutions which, in virtual isolation from one another, are approaching true internationalization. To criticize these efforts because of their fragmentary nature rather than to enhance their progressive continuation would be perverse and unwise, for their very diversity may prove eventually to be their distinctive strength.

Secondly, I recommend that the national advocacy organizations for international education attend more closely to three needs revealed by this and other studies. It is they that must respond to the call from both government and business leaders for more persuasive documentation to make the case for support of internationalization, and for the dissemination of this information in more convincing ways; more research and better data are required for the information of decision-makers who can help the cause, and improved communication about best practices across the country must be facilitated among institutional leaders. In addition, these Ottawa-based organizations have to find ways to include the provinces in their advocacy endeavours – if not directly, then through their member institutions whose leaders could do much to reduce the resistance by their respective provincial governments to endeavours that are nation-wide in scope; if the institutional heads are reluctant to do this (perhaps because of more pressing priorities than international education, or due to indifference or opposition from internal constituencies) then the

national associations should reconsider the advisability of their engagement in this field. Moreover, the advocacy organizations should renew efforts to get their respective acts together on the internationalization file; there remains a fundamental competitiveness among them that serves to retard the international education agenda, to frustrate their member institutions, and to confuse "outsiders" both within Canada and abroad.

The third recommendation derives from my sense of the promise inherent in the centres or councils for international education that have been established in at least five of our provinces. Although they are not well known beyond their respective provincial boundaries, are composed and mandated differently and operate independently of one another, they share a number of important characteristics – for example:

- endorsement and usually funding by provincial governments, although not always through their education departments;

- instalment of the educational institutions as their core constituency;

- extension of scope to include all levels of education, including private as well as public providers (or potential to do so);

- expansion of mission to encompass study abroad, curricular infusion, professional development, and other elements of comprehensive internationalization besides marketing alone (or potential to do so);

- engagement of multiple stake-holders in collaboratively advancing international education, while respecting their autonomy and distinctiveness; and

- involvement of the private sector in their activities (or potential to do so).

These features, I believe, are crucial to achieving sustained internationalization in our educational institutions.

Consequently, it is recommended that the need for coordination of international education

efforts across the country be addressed through forming a federation of these provincial consortia. They are institutionally-driven, which is the appropriate locus for integrated internationalization. They are provincially-based, which is not only constitutionally-dictated but also an apparent *sine qua non* for progress in this area. And they are nationally-distributed, which invests them collectively with the potential for pan-Canadian articulation and cooperation.

What is proposed is a relatively loose confederation among them in which each retains its distinctive nature and autonomy but through which productive synergies can be realized by rendering a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. Thus, they (and the initiative must come from them, although it might be stimulated and facilitated by another entity) should establish a national non-profit organization of which they are the members and which they jointly govern. After obtaining provincial approbation, they should jointly approach the federal government for the funding to create and operate this federation – perhaps through some kind of contribution agreement. This support would not only enable the endeavour but it would also send the oft-requested federal signal that would endorse the national significance of international education, recognize the importance of these provincial entities, and motivate their continued progress (both independently and collectively).

Among the objectives of this federation should be the following:

- to add value by providing professional development and supportive services to the collectivity, achieving economies of effort by reducing redundancies, and facilitating communication and collaboration across provincial boundaries (including the generation and launching of nation-wide programs for the advancement of international education);

- to foster learning from each other's successes and mistakes by sharing best practices;

- to liaise with the federal government, with the CMEC, and (either directly or through some form of association) with at least one of the existing national advocacy organizations;

- to encourage the development of similar entities in those provinces where they do not yet exist;

- to provide a vehicle through which federal funding in support of international education can be channeled — a mechanism that would be a much more appropriate (and successful) means for the Government of Canada's contribution to nation-wide coherence and thrust in the internationalization of education than any effort to override or finesse provincial interests; and

- to develop and capitalize on a Canadian "brand" for education in the international arena.

In this last respect, several leaders of these provincial organizations told me that, while their principal concern was establishing "brands" for the educational programs and services of their own provinces, they would find it of great help to be able to supplement these with a Canada-wide "brand" for "openers" when dealing with those in other countries.

Ideally, with encouragement from this national federation, these provincial entities should move toward:

- incorporating into their memberships both universities and college-type institutions and involving school boards, and perhaps private providers, as well;

- including in their missions the promotion of internationalization in its comprehensive, integrated sense, thus espousing a rationale that is more than economic in nature; and

- operating independently of, but endorsed by, their respective provincial governments, to which their primary (although not necessarily exclusive) links should be through Ministries of Education.

Certain of these ideals are already realized in some of the provincial organizations, and they should be encouraged in all of them. However, they should remain a shared aspiration and not be forced upon any of them. Their autonomy and independent identities must be respected just as they, in turn, respect the distinctive nature of each of their own member institutions; indeed, the opportunity for some diversity among them would be part of their collective strength. The

framework for this federation already exists; it simply has not yet been activated by those that comprise it, although all of their leaders with which it was discussed welcomed the idea.

So that's the essence of what my little study produced. During the process, I was told some things that have particular relevance to your mandate. For example, one important private-sector respondent who runs a large foundation that funds major internationalization efforts at selected universities complained about the hesitancy of Canadian institutions to recognize applying individuals' "other relevant qualifications" and "to adopt flexible criteria for the evaluation of partial studies" – both of which are called for in the international Convention mentioned in the preamble to CICIC's mandate. Several of my interviewees highlighted the need for *interprovincial* recognition agreements, and noted that credit transfer is even a problem *intra-provincially* among institutions – not only between colleges and universities but among universities themselves; your efforts may be as badly needed within Canada as they are between us and other countries. And I heard some concerns about "brain drain", especially from less developed to more industrialized nations, in terms of both international students who choose to remain in their host countries rather than returning home after completing their studies and of highly qualified professionals trained in other countries who are recruited to practice in the more economically advanced nations; this issue is certainly relevant to your mission, and I'm sure you have been concerned about it in your deliberations.

Let me conclude by observing that, given the growing acknowledgment by Canadian educational leaders of the importance that international education has for their academic quality, financial solvency and public reputation, the time is probably propitious for a renewed effort to promote the advancement of CICIC's mandate *among* Canadian institutions as well as *between*

them and those in other countries. Indeed, pursuing the latter objective could perhaps serve to motivate achievement of the former. Moreover, the recent Canadian interest in the European and Asian Credit Transfer Systems plus the international movement toward diploma supplements may serve as stimulators for such an endeavour, and the provincial organizations highlighted in my study might serve to facilitate it.

So it appears that there is some relationship between what I have been engaged in and what you do through CICIC. I would welcome your comments about this or any questions that you'd like to raise with me. Thank you for your attention.